

[Wisdom 9:13-18b, Psalm 90; Philemon 9-10, 12-17; Luke 14:25-33]

Today, the Roman Catholic Church rejoices as Pier Giorgio Frassati and Carlo Acutis are officially declared saints — two young disciples, chosen by God for our era, who show us that holiness is not only possible but contagious.

Pier Giorgio Frassati, called by Saint John Paul II “The Man of the Beatitudes,” was born April 6, 1901. An Italian layman and Catholic activist, who was known for his deep faith, love for the poor, social action and joy-filled spirit.

As a college student and avid mountain climber, he devoted his life to prayer, service, and friendship. He died after a brief illness on July 4, 1925 and was beatified in 1990. He inspires young adults 18 to 35 to live boldly for Christ with joy and generosity. His motto was “Verso L 'Alto” – “Toward the Heights!” Or, “Reach for the TOP!”

Carlo Acutis, our first Millennial Saint, was born May 3, 1991. An Italian teen whose love for the Eucharist and skill with technology led him to create a website cataloging Eucharistic miracles -- earning him the nickname "God's influencer." Diagnosed with leukemia at 15, he offered his sufferings for the Pope (Benedict XVI) and for the Church, living a heroic yet ordinary life of faith. He died on October 12, 2006 and was beatified in 2020. He is the patron saint of teens.

These are not distant figures from centuries past -- Pier Giorgio and Carlo walked streets like ours, faced struggles like ours, and yet gave everything for Christ.

Their canonization, or official declaration of sainthood, is a prophetic sign for today's Church: God is raising up a generation of saints, and He's calling our young people to be next.

Canonization is not simply an honor; it is the Church's joyful proclamation that these brothers in Christ now live forever with God and intercede for us. Saints are witnesses to Christ's love, showing us what it looks like to say "yes" to Him with our lives.

In this Jubilee Year of Hope, the canonization of Pier Giorgio and Carlo reminds us that holiness is not an exception — it is our calling. Each one of us here is called to grow in holiness. These two young saints speak powerfully into the heart of this generation:

- In a world saturated with digital noise, Carlo shows us that the Internet can be used to learn about the faith and that the Eucharist is our "Highway to Heaven."
- In a culture that longs for meaning, Pier Giorgio shows us that true happiness comes from laying down our lives in love and service.

This moment is a beacon of hope for the Church, especially for young people. It proclaims that sainthood isn't a relic of the past -- it's alive, attainable, and unfolding right now. For you and for me!

Do you have what it takes to be a saint, a disciple? Don't panic: You don't have to "hate" your family. Remember what I said a couple of weeks ago: The word "hate" which Jesus uses in the context of this Gospel translates as "to love less." Here is how to do it in four ways. With God, with our relationships with others, with our possessions, and with ourselves.

Our first priority, requiring our greatest love and attention: God. How do we get to God? Through listening to His Word and following His commandments and teachings. By making time and giving the effort to get to know Him, to fall in love with Him and to serve Him.”

Second priority: your relationships. Love those you love, LESS than you love God. Frankly, it’s awkward no matter when we read this teaching. I mean, how many of us really hate our families? (I’m NOT going to ask for a show of hands!) Sure, certain family members get on our nerves occasionally. We have falling-outs from time to time for all sorts of reasons: political or religious differences, lifestyle choices, insensitive remarks made in the heat of an argument, as well as real injuries suffered at the hands of those who can hurt us deeply because we loved and trusted them the most.

But even when a spouse, parent, sibling, child, or other relative disappoints us terribly, the majority of the time, we still don’t find it in our hearts to hate them. Something in us still yearns to be reconciled and reconnected with them.

There is no peace until the mending of bridges starts and the healing has a chance to begin. Even if it isn’t possible to receive that person back into our lives again, we know we need at least the balm of divine forgiveness to close the wound that remains between them and us. Because, at the end of the day, no matter what that other person did or failed to do, we’re still family, and that is the strongest bond in the world.

Third priority: your material and financial possessions. That means being ready to “renounce” your possessions. In classic spiritual language, it is called, “detachment.” You put your material

possessions in proper priority. Remember: we LOVE people and we USE things, we do not use people and love things. That's wrong.

Fourth priority: you! It's been said that when we find out who we are, we learn what we are called to be.

So, we discover that in taking care of ourselves, in reaching out to our families and to those in need, and putting all of our financial and material possessions at the service of the Lord, we learn that God is there the whole time. Love God, love others, and love yourself. God is in the other.

Your questions for this week to reflect upon:

When have you felt the most unsure of the next best step?
Have you ever felt confident that God's wisdom set you straight?

Who are the modern-day Pauls in your life -- disciples that through example and some urging help you to do the right thing?

What relationships -- to people or things -- prevent you from putting Christ first in your life?

Together, let us echo the words of Carlo Acutis:

"Being a saint is not complicated. It's simply loving God."

Let's lead our teens and young adults to encounter Christ and dare them to live like the saints they -- and WE -- are created and called to be. Come, Holy Spirit. Make us saints. St. Carlo Acutis, pray for us. St. Pier Giorgio Frassati, pray for us! AMEN!